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Cpl. Kristopher Ivanov (right), security battalion, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, hands out a stocking full of candy and gifts to Cpl. Brian E. Jenkins, standing guard at Al Asad, Iraq, Dec. 22. Ivanov's mom, Julieann, hand sowed hundreds of stockings, with the help of friends, to give to the deployed Marines for the holidays. *Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri*

U.S. supports troops with flood of care packages

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq— "The main reason for me to contribute to the armed forces is in some small way to communicate to these young men and women that their fellow citizens back home care about them and that they are not forgotten," said a message from Chetan N. Patel, owner of Scientific Molding Corporation in Somerset, Wis.

In his brief remarks about a gift of 25 power tools he sent to the Marines, Sailors and Soldiers of Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Patel echoed the thoughts of so many other Americans this holiday season.

The message is simply "I hope this helps," he said.

With U.S. troops deployed to Iraq for the second holiday season, many people back home are feeling a need to do whatever they can to support the troops however they can, Patel explained. His thoughts were on helping the Marines with their daily lives as he sent the woodworking tools that his company produces.

"In my mind it is better to spread the money where there is a need," he said. "I cannot think of anybody more deserving than our Marines to receive some of the products that we proudly make here at SMC. These are young men (and women) who are ready to give up their lives to protect our way of life. I hope the tools are useful to the Marines."

It is not just companies that have identified a need, but families as well.

Julieann and Pavel Ivanov, the parents of Cpl. Kristopher Ivanov, a 3rd MAW band member currently serving with Security Platoon, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, also saw a need and decided to act on it. They organized a campaign, called "Operation Stocking Stuffer," that intended to send stockings to their son's small unit for this Christmas.

"My mother took the whole thing on her own," said the 20-year-old from Gilbert, Ariz. "My mom wanted to take care of my platoon, which is (over 40 Marines), and it started off with just that. (She) was just telling friends and family, and then the news heard about it ... (from there) it got around the whole valley and a bunch of people wanted to help out. It went from 45 stockings to doing over 700 stockings."

The giving spirit is infectious and an amazing thing to behold, he commented.

"All I can say is that I'm very grateful to have great parents and I love them very much," Ivanov said. "It's amazing how much the American people want to help out and how much they want to do for us over here. They'll do anything. My mom will be walking down the street and she's been on TV before, so people will stop her, write a check and hand it to her. They don't even know her, they've just seen her on TV and want to help us out over here."

The stockings will be handed out to the Marines in Ivanov's unit first, then the rest will be transported to Marines isolated

See SUPPORT page 9

15th MEU assists tsunami victims

Story by Lance Cpl. Scott L. Eberle

15th MEU Combat Correspondent

ABOARD USS BONHOMME RICH-ARD — In the wake of the recent tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean and claimed more than 100,000 lives, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) has begun gearing up for one of the largest Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations in history.

While heading full speed to the affected area, Marines and Sailors have been working hard to prepare thousands of Meals Ready to Eat, pallets full of purified water and other supplies to hit the ground to immediately help relieve the suffering of thousands of victims left devastated by the catastrophe.

Scores of people were left homeless, in need of food and clean water when giant waves ripped

across several coastal nations in the Indian Ocean. The 15th MEU (SOC) was on their way to the Western Pacific when the natural disaster took place. They were scheduled to spend five days of training in Guam before being called to provide assistance in the region. The USS Bonhomme Richard and USS Duluth spent just a few short hours in Guam loading supplies needed for the humanitarian operation.

On New Year's Day a working party of Marines went through more than 750 cases of MREs and removed meals that contained food not appropriate for some of the cultures affected by the tsunami.

"The entire 15th MEU will not all be going to the same location. On Jan. 4, the USS Duluth will break off from the rest of the pack to provide assistance in Indonesia," according to Staff

See MEU page 9



Lance Cpl. Konrad U. Nikolao, 21, (left) and Sgt. Shannon R. Haynes, 29, of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), help prepare thousands of Meals Ready to Eat to hand out to victims of the catastrophic tsunami that recently struck in the Indian Ocean. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott L. Eberle*

Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station







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Keeping resolutions

Commentary by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Each year millions of people make New Year's resolutions and each year people break their resolu-

A lot of people set high goals for themselves and then, months, weeks or even days later, end up making excuses when they pick up another cigarette or stop using their gym membership.

According to www.how-to-keep-your-new-yearsresolution.com, most people don't know how to make a reasonable resolution, which is why they fail to keep

I once made a resolution to stop eating chocolate my favorite food. Inevitably, after two weeks of torture, I ended up stuffing myself with brownies, chocolate chip cookies and anything in sight with a hint of chocolate. I never made that resolution again.

The problem wasn't a lack of self-control or will power. I just didn't go about accomplishing my resolution the right way.

I have learned that you cannot make a resolution that you know you won't keep. I wasn't about to give up something that made me happy, so I set myself up for failure that year.

Now this doesn't mean making a goal to quit smoking if you've never picked up a cigarette in your life

New Year's Resolutions" at www.wlns.com, a resolu-

done without disrupting your life.

Last year, I sat down minutes before the clock struck midnight, hastily scribbling down a list of impossible goals for myself. I didn't keep a single one

Prior planning is critical if you want to tell a resolution success story. For example, if you want to lose 15 pounds, you just can't go to the gym one day and sweat off all of your weight. You would have to devise a long-term plan and break down your resolution in simple steps.

After coming up with well thought out resolutions, www.wlns.com recommends announcing them to someone in order to increase your chances of success. Telling people will give you a support system and those same people can remind you of your goals if you start to slip off course.

If you do stay on track, you can reward yourself for sticking to your resolution. For example, if you lose 5 pounds one month, reward yourself with a new outfit. You can treat yourself at the end of each month, granted you have made progress.

This rewards program will give you something to look forward to, while propelling you to success.

The main thing to keep in mind when trying to accomplish your resolutions this year is to not be so hard on yourself. This self-berating technique can lead

you to give up your goals. If you indulge in a cookie or two, it doesn't mean just to keep a resolution. that you've failed your diet. Think of all those extra According to an article entitled, "Keeping your salads you've been eating. Just remember—there's always next year. tion should be something well thought out and easily Coping with anxiety when loved ones deploy to war

Story by Capt. Jennifer Berg

LIFELines

Deployment of our loved ones requires the development of strong coping skills. Many military spouses and extended family members have learned to cope with the stresses of a routine deployment. But when a loved one is deployed to a combat situation, it is a whole different ballgame.

Combat situations mean less communication with our loved ones, and less knowledge about where they are and what they are doing. The media is filled with projections about possible casualties and images of bombings. Suddenly, fears develop about the safety of our military family members that are much more intense than ever before.

People tell you don't worry, but you may develop a feeling of constant anxiety, sleep disturbance, or panic attacks, and wonder if you are going crazy. You're not! But you do need to start utilizing the following tips to help you minimize and control your anxiety.

WHAT CAN FAMILY MEMBERS DO TO RE-**DUCE ANXIETY?**

Focus on a daily routine. Familiar habits are comforting.

- Develop a daily ritual time in which you focus on your loved one. Some people choose the first thing in the morning, others the evenings before bed. Take several minutes to relax, taking deep breaths and focusing your thoughts on a pleasant time, feeling, or special ritual that you have with your loved one. Gaze at their picture. Relive a happy moment and truly focus all your positive energy for three minutes on your loved one's image. As you close, send them a spiritual message in your mind that they are loved. Depending on your spiritual beliefs, you may choose to pray for their safety. Imagine yourself shaking loose your worries and fears as you breathe deeply and go on with your normal activities.
- Make sure you get enough rest and sleep. If you are having troubles sleeping, make sure that you are following proper sleep hygiene techniques, such as keeping the room temperature at 68 degrees, avoiding exercise or caffeine in the hours before bedtime, and avoiding TV programs or movies that may stimulate your fear.
- Eat healthy food and take time to walk, stretch, exercise and relax, even if just for a few minutes at a
 - Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, illicit drugs, and caf-

See ANXIETY page 8



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MiramarkS

"What is your resolution for the New Year?"

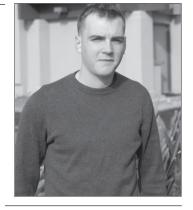


CPL. DAMON A. SIMPSON VMFA(AW)-121

"I want to get some education out of the way in the New Year."

CPL. MARTIN STEWART Ordnance Technician

"I'm trying to keep in touch with my friends and family better."





LANCE CPL. GELIN VIELMAN Legal Services Specialist

"For the New Year, I just want to continue my educa-

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Gunny wounded while saving Marine

Story by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

FALLUJAH, Iraq — The sound is loud, sharp and piercing. It's a sound that is unforgiving and ruthless. Its actions are not always understood, yet its consequences... are severe.

It's the sound of a bullet whizzing by. How close? It's hard to tell. But out in the battlefield a Marine would probably say, "If you hear it, then you're still alive."

Zigzagging through alleyways to avoid enemy fire, Marines had just entered the city of Fallujah for Operation Al Fajr in the late hours of Nov. 8.

The sun was creeping up along the horizon Nov. 9 when 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, reached the first major intersection in the northern sector of the city. All sides were clear. The company commander gave the "go," and 1st squad darted across the wide road.

Then the sound. Unmistakable, the Marines knew it was gunfire, and it was close. The squad now split by the main road, confusion erupted. Everyone quickly looked around, checking to see if anyone was hurt. Horrified, the Marines of Company B could see one of their own laying in the middle of the road.

Without hesitation, Gunnery Sgt. Ryan P. Shane, platoon sergeant, 2nd Platoon, dashed out into the line of fire.

With sparks kicking up around him, Shane ran to the fatally wounded Marine, grabbed his collar, and attempted to pull him to safety. But the enemy was unrelenting, and within seconds, Shane spun to the ground.

The incoming fire was intense. The radio crackled, "Men down, men down!" People were screaming orders, everyone trying to figure what just happened.

Within seconds the Marines returned fire toward the enemy's location. With the support of nearly every Marine and his weapon, a group ran out and rescued the downed Marines. Although severely wounded, Shane would pull through.

He was rushed out of the city, treated at a hospital, and is now recovering from his injuries.

Sgt. Joe Torres, 1st squad leader, 2nd Platoon, Company B, was second in command and took over once Shane was hit.

"Gunny had always been one to take care of his platoon," said Torres. "It's expected of him to run out into the middle of the street to save someone."

According to members of the platoon, Shane's sacrifices will always be remembered as he set the example for future leaders.



Gunnery Sgt. Ryan P. Shane, platoon sergeant, 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, pulls a fatally wounded Marine to safety while under fire during Operation Al Fajr, Nov. 9. Seconds later Shane was also wounded by enemy fire. *Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri*

"He always used to say that we needed to be as 'hard as woodpecker lips," said Sgt. Michael R. Ramirez, 26, squad leader, 2nd Platoon, Company B. "He definitely proved that for himself out here."

"He's probably one of the best (staff noncommissioned officers) in the entire company," said Lance Cpl. Xavier Forester, 23, assaultman, 2nd Platoon, Company B. "He's someone we can all look up to."

Even with the early loss, the Marines of Company B were able to instantly take control of the situation, and continued to clear the city of insurgents and weapons.

CG awards Soldiers for saving pilots

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq — Maj. Gen. Keith J. Stalder, commanding general, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, awarded the Soldier's Medal to two Soldiers Dec. 18 who risked their lives to save two Marine pilots.

The recipients were Staff Sgt. Spencer A. Howell, medic, and Spc. Eric Burns, UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief, who were awarded for their heroic actions at Al Taqaddum, Iraq, Mar. 29. Both Soldiers are in Iraq with the 507th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), 429th Evacuation Battalion, but are working as part of Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd MAW.

The awards ceremony took place in an aircraft hangar at Al Asad, Iraq. Soldiers, Sailors and Marines gathered to honor these two men who had earned one of the nation's highest awards for heroism not actually engaging enemy forces. The awards were well earned Stalder said in his remarks to the crowd.

"In a unit that does this for a living, that saves people's lives, that goes into harm's way to take care of other people, these two Soldiers stood out even among that great group," he said. "They are truly worthy of recognition. Their courage in the face of clear and persistent danger during the time it must've taken to rescue those two Marines is absolutely remarkable and undeniable to those of us who can imagine that."

As Capt. Mark K. Morris read the citation of events that happened, the "thousand-yard stare" started to glaze over the eyes of the two recipients as they again relived that fateful day.

'The ceremony today put me right back at the scene," Howell said. "I could see myself. I could envision everything when (Morris) read the narrative."

As the Blackhawk helicopter was returning from an urgent medical evacuation mis-

sion, a blinding flash of light caught the attention of everyone in the aircraft, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jeffrey Burke, pilot in com-

"I thought it was a mortar attack, at least that was my perception," said the 39-year-old from Emlenton, Pa. "There was a huge flash and 'Boom!' The huge explosion shut our (night-vision goggles) down momentarily."

The explosion turned out to be a mid-air collision of the MEDEVAC's two AH-1W Super Cobra escort helicopters. Burke was in charge of the mission that night and remembers that Burns was the first to see what happened and react. Burns said he just went into "autopilot" mode.

"I saw it first," said the tall, lanky Soldier from St. Louis. "It just got really bad from something we do everyday. I don't even know what I thought, instinct just kicked in when I realized those guys needed help, so we (hurried) up to make sure they were alright."

Burke immediately let the two Soldiers go to work, Morris read.

"Within seconds, Staff Sgt. Howell and Spc. Burns were at the crash site assessing the situation," Morris continued to read to the gathered audience. "The wreckage was a scene chaotic with the remnants of the aircraft scattered over the taxiway and the runway."

When Burns and Howell got to the two aircraft, Burns was able to help one aircraft's occupants out rather quickly while Howell worked feverishly to get the Marines out of the other aircraft. Engine parts where still moving and the aircraft were on fire when Burns came back to help, which is when Howell began to think they might have gotten in over their heads.

"The part where I thought it might've been too dangerous, was when we almost got those two guys out," said the 31-year-old from Pontiac, Mich. "We were trying to get them



Two AH-1W Super Cobras lie in pieces along the runway at Al Taqaddum, Iraq, Mar. 30. The two light attack helicopters accidentally collided in mid-air prompting the heroic rescue of the pilots by two Soldiers with the 507th Medical Company, 429th Evacuation Battalion. Staff Sgt. Spencer A. Howell, medic, and Spc. Eric S. Burns, UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief, were awarded the Soldier's Medal for their actions, which saved the lives of the downed aircraft's pilots. The Soldier's Medal is one of the nation's highest awards for heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy. Photo by Cpl. Chance W. Haworth

out, the fire department came over to try to put out the fire. Fire, fuel and everything was all over the place and when they sprayed the fire, the fumes and fire came into the cockpit area. I thought that we were all going to burn. It was

"We had to wave those guys off," he went on. "They redirected and we went and got (the pilot) out."

Burns would downplay his actions, calling them a byproduct of his unit's constant operations in Iraq.

"It's natural thought," said the 22-year-old. "Since we're in the medical field we do this everyday so our natural reaction when we see something, like a car accident or something, is to go help them without even thinking."

Others, including the commanding officer of the 507th Medical Company, Maj. Jack Leech, who put the two Soldiers up for the award, would disagree with the specialist about his actions.

"Not every single person, not every Soldier would've taken immediate action the way they did," Leech explained. "They didn't hesitate when they saw someone was in harm's way and ran over and rendered that aid. As a commander, this is unquestionably the most proud since I've worn this uniform to be able to stand up here and be a part of this. It's important for us to take a little bit of time to recognize their efforts and what they did that early morning that ended up saving two Marines' lives."

Lt. Col. Peter Quinn, battalion commander, 429th Evacuation Battalion, also attended the

"It's been a while coming. This is what this whole unit, the 507th does for a living, saves lives," Quinn said. "These guys took it the extra step and were personally involved in saving a couple Marine pilots. It's definitely an honor for me to come down here and be a part of the ceremony to thank them."

Stalder was proud of the Soldiers as well and also noted their heroic actions are a great credit to the multi-service team that makes up 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing in Iraq.

"I'm proud to have recognized two great Soldiers as we've just heard," Stalder said. "For their faith, their courage and their selflessness in the face of great personal risk, this is absolutely an appropriate and well-deserved award. Gentlemen, on behalf of the entire Marine Corps and all of the Marines, Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen who serve with you, we are honored to be a part of your team."

Recreational ranges provide marksmanship alternatives

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Although a year has passed since its closure, some Marines still miss Marine Corps Community Services' Recreational Pistol Range.

"(When it was open) I used to go every week. Then I went one weekend and it was closed," said Cpl. Daniel Delgado, administrative clerk, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.



The American Shooting Center offers realistic training for pistolmarksmanship practice. Patrons can bring their own weapons or rent them, for a fee, at the center. Photo by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCCS stopped offering the service because there were not enough Marines like Delgado consistently taking advantage of the range, according to Linda A. Gerardi, executive administrative assistant, MCCS.

"We were paying staff to run it and no one was really coming. It was lack of participation that got it closed down. (The closure) was a business-based action," she added.

There are some facilities MCCS can lose money on and still maintain because these category "A" services receive appropriated funds. However the range was a category "B" facility. "It didn't have to make money but it had to be selfsustaining, and it wasn't," Gerardi said.

Delgado said his primary reason for using the range wasn't recreational. "When I first got here I was (motivated) and I got a pistol badge but I wanted to improve my score," he said.

Like many Marines, Delgado wants to improve his score but only practices once a year when qualification time comes around. However, just because MCCS doesn't run a recreational facility here doesn't mean pistol shooting must become a once-a-year training experience. There are several

The most affordable and nearby training experience is the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer. Marines can call the ISMT training office during working hours and set up a training session anytime regardless of whether or not they are qualifying or currently training.

If the session is during a rifle or pistol qualification week, Marines will train with scheduled training relays. If the session is during an off week, Marines will most likely shoot on their own. To make an appointment, call 577-9727.

For a real shooting experience, the closest recreational 25-yard indoor rifle and pistol range is the American Shooting Center on Ruffin Road, south of the air station. There are classes and one-on-one instruction sessions available. Patrons must have a valid photo identification card and be over 18 years old in order to use the range.

Delgado said he tried a pistol range off station once, but never returned again. "I went to one and paid an outrageous price. I was there for two hours and paid \$30," he said.

To avoid large bills, visit well-researched ranges. Most nearby ranges offer a military discount and prices vary depending on what gear patrons supply for themselves. The American Shooting Center charges a nominal fee for a day's use of the range.

Other costs include ammunition, targets and pistol or rifle rental. If Marines bring their own gear, the only fee is the range usage cost. The center is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday -Saturday and noon until 7 p.m. on Sundays.

San Diego Shotgun Sports also offers recreational shooting opportunities. "It is available to anybody. There is no age limit. As long as you can safely handle the gun you can shoot, but if you are under the age of 18 you have to be escorted by an adult," said Nikolle D. Wertel, office manager, San Diego Shotgun Sports.

For more information on the American Shooting Center, visit their Web site at www.gotammo.com. For directions or information on San Diego Shotgun Sports, log on to www.sandiegoshotgunsports.com.

HMM-268 corpsman gets wounded Marine's ring home

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq — Life is funny, thought the 29-year-old Marine captain. One minute, he was observing his battalion's treatment of Iraqi detainees in Fallujah, Iraq and the next he was struck by mortar fire on Nov. 12 and embarked on the long journey to home and recovery.

He suffered the partial amputation of his right index finger, right thumb and shrapnel lacerations to his right thigh, but the only thing he could think about was the loss of something much more important to him.

"Sometime after the ground (medical evacuation) my wedding band was lost," said Capt. Jonathan Vaughn, who is the Staff Judge Advocate for 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. "I was sad to discover I lost the ring. (It) means a great deal to me and my wife."

The rings were much more than just simple bands of metal, small tokens of their marriage, Vaughn said.

"Something we both hold sacred is honoring and respecting each other, therefore we had the phrase 'Forever Honoring' inscribed in both of our wedding bands to signify the commitment we have towards each other," he explained. "The rings signify the trust, devotion and love we have for each other."

The meaning behind their wedding rings made the loss that much harder, Vaughn continued.

"The ring was the only item I truly cared about and wanted to bring home," he said. "Everything else could stay in Iraq and I wouldn't care. My wife, while exhilarated that I returned alive from Iraq, was saddened to notice the loss of my ring when she was holding my hand before my third surgery."

Meanwhile, back in Iraq, Petty Officer 3rd Class Brady M. Freeman, casualty evacuation corpsmen, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, was making a discovery of his own, said Sgt. Maj. Donald C. Miller, HMM-268 sergeant major.

"After one of our casualty evacuation missions during the Fallujah battle, one of our corpsman, HM3 Freeman, found the ring on the aircraft he was flying in."

Freeman said he had an almost immediate reaction of what do with the ring and whom it might belong to.

"I believe it belonged to a patient from a prior casualty evacuation earlier that morning or from the previous night," said the Georgetown, Ohio native. "I brought it to my chain of command. I knew how much this ring meant to its owner. There was no doubt in my mind that it had to be returned."

After turning the ring in to his chain of command, Miller called in for help in locating the owner.

"I decided to contact the person who I knew could get the word out to as many people as possible and that would be the (I Marine Expeditionary Force) sergeantmajor, Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent."

Within 36 hours of this, Miller was contacted by Religious Programs Specialist 1st Class Patrick Bowen from Bravo Surgical Company, 1st Force Service Support Group, at Camp Fallujah, who claimed to know the owner.

While recuperating back home in Oceanside, Calif., Vaughn decided to try one last ditch effort to retrieve the lost ring.

"I sent an e-mail to Capt. (Terry W. Horton)," he said. "I had no idea who Capt. Horton could contact to locate the ring, though I knew he would put all the effort he could into finding it."

The results were nearly instantaneous.

"To my surprise, Capt. Horton responded within a day indicating he found the ring after only sending out a single email to Bravo Surgical. It appears Sgt. Maj. Miller had sent an e-mail ... indicating the discovery of the ring and the search for its rightful owner."

Horton personally delivered the ring to Vaughn Dec. 7 while executing his own permanent change of station move.



Capt. Jonathan Vaughn , Staff Judge Advocate, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, and his wife, Claudette, pose for a photo with both wedding rings intact. Vaughn was wounded in action in Fallujah, Iraq, Nov. 12 by enemy mortar fire. While in transit, Vaughn's wedding ring was lost. Through the efforts of Sailors and Marines, the ring was returned to Vaughn. *Photo bySgt. Robert M. Storm*

Freeman downplayed his own part in the return of the ring as something that any Marine or Sailor would've done in his place.

"The most important thing to me is to honor the traditions of the Navy and Marine Corps," he said. "My patients are my mission and are sacred to me. Hopefully many years from now, I can look back and smile because out here I did something worth doing. I didn't go above or beyond like most others. I just did the right thing."

To Vaughn, however, the return of his precious belonging is that culmination of

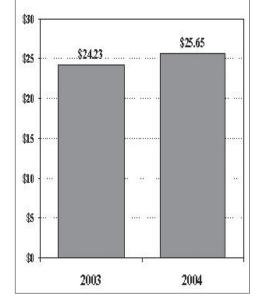
the Navy and Marine ethos he values so much.

"I would like to personally thank each and every Marine and Sailor who contributed to the recovery of my ring," he said. "The Marines and Sailors went to every length possible to ensure the ring was returned to me. (It's) a demonstration of what makes them unique and distinct in the armed services. I will forever be grateful to them ... because they demonstrated great faith and devotion to a fellow Marine."

CFC Average Gift Up

The average gift given in the 2004 CFC campaign by Miramar personnel was up 5.8% over last year.

A detailed end-of-campaign tally will be in next week's edition.



Clearing Fallujah:

1/8 searchs buildings, establishes security

Photo Story by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

FALLUJAH, Iraq — The Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, were in the city of Fallujah, Iraq, for weeks during

Operation Al Fajr.

Searching nearly every building along the way, the company cleared a path that would help to establish a secure environment for the residents of Fallujah when they return.



Lance Cpl. Michael Oliver Ray, rifleman, Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, kicks down a door while searching the city of Fallujah, Iraq, for insurgents and weapons during Operation AI Fajr. Operation AI Fajr is an offensive operation to eradicate enemy forces within the city of Fallujah. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri



Lance Cpl. Joshua E. Lucero, 19, a combat engineer with Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Mari to sit down Nov. 9 after intense fighting in Fallujah, Iraq, during Operation Al Fajr. Operation Fallujah in support of continued security and stabilization operations in the Al Anbar province by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

Former pilot reveals to

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent.

To an outsider it might seem strange that Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, known as the "Ridge Runners," have "Evil Eyes" painted on their hangar, on their aircraft and sewn onto their patches.

Most Marines within the squadron agree "Evil Eyes" sounds better than "Ridge Runners," but that begs the question where did the evil eyes come from and why is it all over HMM-163's equipment and personnel instead of the "Ridge Runner"

At first glance it seemed clear. Posted on the HMM-163 Web page was a little squadron lore on how the "Evil Eyes" came to be part of the Ridge Runner's history. The story explained the prominent evil eyes on the nose of the squadron's aircraft dated from a time when Vietnamese fishermen painted eyes on their boats to ward off evil spirits and to help them find their way home.

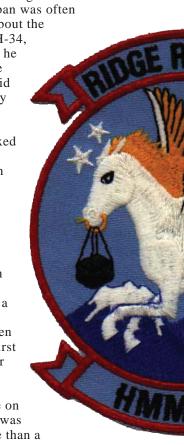
The tale went on to say that during the 1960s, one superstitious crew chief painted the eyes on his H-34 to ward off enemy fire. During the next battle, his aircraft sustained the fewest hits. Other crew chiefs soon followed his example, and the evil eyes became the squadron good luck charm. Or, so the story went.

It was an interesting tale, and it passed from commanding officer to commanding officer for several decades, until a former HMM-163 pilot named Norm Urban took interest in an H-34 permanently parked at

the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum here. Urban recognized the evil eyes on an aircraft he once flew in the 60s.

After becoming a volunteer at the museum, Urban was often questioned about the eyes on the H-34, and although he once flew the aircraft, he did not know why the squadron painted them on it. Perplexed and determined, Urban set out to find the story behind the eyes, beginning at the HMM-163 squadron Web site. Having been a part of the squadron when the aircraft first received their eyes, Urban knew right away the tale on the Web site was nothing more than a myth.

After a lot of research, Urban found the truth behind the evil eyes. In March 1965, a photographer from Life Magazine accompanied the "Ridge Runners" on a mission into a hot landing zone. The story devel-





ne Regiment, 1st Marine Division, takes a moment Al Fair is an offensive operation within the city of e of Iraq by units of the 1st Marine Division. Photo



A Marine with Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, guards the entrance to a secured building Nov. 24 in Fallujah, Iraq, during Operation Al Fajr. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

Lance Cpl. Michael Pristavec, rifleman, Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, stares down "AK" Nov. 24, a dog that followed the Marines around while they searched and cleared houses in Fallujah, Iraq, during Operation Al Fajr. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri



rue origin of 'Evil Eyes'

oped an image for HMM-163, which the commanding officer felt was necessary to shake off.

In January 1966, before the squadron went to Phu Bai, Vietnam, the commanding officer decided to make a

> change to bring the squadron together and build camaraderie

> > with a new logo. It was his contention that the locals hated evil spirits and equally disliked being watched. Upon arrival to Phu Bai, the evil eyes were immediately painted on all the aircraft. In the begin-

ning, they were referred to as genie eyes, in reference to a popular television show called "I Dream of Jeannie." However, infantry units began requesting air

support from the "Evil Eyes," and the name has stuck

for almost forty years.

No one knows where the fictional story came from, but the real history is in the process of being updated on the squadron's Web site.

"There is no other squadron out there in the Marine Corps, the grunts can see coming, and recognize like us," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey K. Mosher, commanding officer, HMM-163, about the bright, menacing eyes on all the squadron aircraft.

Although the Marines of HMM-163 currently have a choice between wearing the official Headquarters Marine Corps approved "Ridge Runners" patch or the "Evil Eyes," most wear the "Evil Eyes."

"I prefer wearing the 'Evil Eyes.' The squadron logo should change. I think we are one of the best squadrons out there. We're the tip of the spear. We're the ones that get the troops out, supply them, and support them in every way we can. I think the 'Evil Eyes' bring us luck," said Pfc. Jan Pietrzak, airframes mechanic, HMM-

HMM-163 becomes a composite squadron in January and will be reinforced with CH-53E Super Stallion Helicopters, AH-1W Super Cobra Helicopters, UH-1N Huey Helicopters, and AV-8B Harriers by spring of next year. "Eventually all these aircraft will have Evil Eyes," said Mosher.

By then the squadron will have many more aircraft and personnel, and the choice between wearing the "Ridge Runners" patch or the "Evil Eyes" patch will be obsolete. Everyone will wear "Evil Eyes."

"It's good for the squadron, for camaraderie, and for morale. You don't want your squadron to fractionalize," said Mosher.

There are no current plans to change the official squadron designation from "Ridge Runners" to "Evil Eyes."



Lance Cpl. Edward W. Johnson II, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, stands watch at the west gate of the air station Dec. 13. MPs ensure the security of the air station 24 hours a day, seven days a week. *Photo by Pfc. James B. Hoke*

MPs take a bite out of crime

Story by Pfc. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Through day and night, rain and shine, these Marines stand their post, keeping danger out, accidents down and loss of property to a minimum.

Miramar's Military Police spend countless hours patrolling and guarding the air station to prevent any unnecessary disturbances from happening and respond to any unusual or emergency incidents.

"The mission for the MPs on Miramar is basically like interior guard," said Cpl. Randy A. Poage, impound noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. "We enforce regulations, preserve order and protect property.

"We have the responsibility to provide security for the base, which (is) primarily the gates," he added. "We also (provide security) with the road units, which are for patrol and insulation of the perimeter."

However, MPs also correct violations of Marine Corps regulations and state vehicle codes.

"We correct violations that we see on vehicles like missing license plates, expired registration, drivers not carrying proper insurance and (driving under the influence), which is the most common issue for us," he added.

Although a few Marines may claim to be ignorant of certain regulations, they should be briefed when checking in to Miramar.

"When (Marines) check in they should (get) a brief on

(motor vehicle and barracks) regulations and how to properly register their vehicles," said Poage.

Marines who have registered vehicles are placed on the point system.

"For traffic violations for the military personnel on Miramar, we issue a Department of Defense traffic violation (citation) and those tickets equate to points on the Marine's base driving record," Poage said. "Marines are allotted twelve points a year and if they accumulate more than that number of points during that year their license is suspended."

Many civilian traffic law violations are common occurrences here on station as well.

"The most common traffic violations that we see (are) speeding, failure to stop at stop signs, improper turns, (by) not using your signal at the turn and expired registration," added Page.

Apart from their road units enforcing traffic laws, there are several other jobs MPs perform and Marines new to this field must work their way up to the advanced assignments like the road units.

"New Marines who check in are put on the gate so they can learn the job," Poage added. "Once they have a basic understanding of how things work on the gate, we put them on the road with an MP that has been here longer and has more experience."

Whether searching vehicles for bombs or preventing reckless drivers from endangering others, Miramar's MPs continue to guard and protect the air station with dedication and vigilance.

ANXIETY

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feine. Although people often increase their use of these substances when stressed, they only increase anxiety.

- Do not spend all your time listening to or watching the news. Check the news periodically, but otherwise turn off the news reports. Distract yourself by playing relaxing music at home or in the car, or by doing something you enjoy.
- Spend time with other people if this helps you. Some people actually prefer to be alone, but typically coping with stressful events is easier when people support each other.
- Make time each day to do something for yourself that feels good, such as taking a warm bath, taking a walk, enjoying a good meal. Take your children to a playground. If you don't have children, go to a playground and watch children- you can't help but smile at their joyfulness.
- Ask for support from your family, friends, church or community groups.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES TO REDUCE

ANXIETY:

- Breathing exercises: Position yourself comfortably in a sitting position. Close your eyes and focus on how your body feels. Take deep slow breaths and focus on your breathing, in and out. Do this for at least 10 minutes.
- Muscle relaxation: Sit comfortably or rest lying down. Close your eyes and beginning with your toes, begin to contract your muscle groups for 10 seconds at a time each (toes, feet, calves, thighs, pelvis, abdomen, chest, shoulders, upper arms, lower arms, and fingers). Relax each muscle group before you proceed to the next. Sit quietly after finishing for 10 seconds, then open your eyes.
- Cognitive relaxation: Close your eyes and imagine yourself on a warm sunny beach. Feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, listen to the wave sounds, focus on how relaxed you feel for several minutes.

WHAT TO DO FOR A PANIC ATTACK:

Panic attacks can be scary when you don't know what they are. Sometimes when anxiety and fears are high, you may find yourself feeling an acute sense of doom, associated with a racing heart, feeling like you can't get enough air, chest pain, dizziness or nausea. As scary as they are while they are going on, panic attacks will pass, usually in 2-3 minutes, although they seem to last much longer in your mind.

Check with your primary care physician to make sure that these episodes are not based on a physical problem such as heart or lung disease. If he agrees that they sound like panic attacks, then take the following steps the next time one occurs:

- Recognize that it is a panic attack. Concentrate on slowing down your breathing and on taking deep breaths. If you are in a crowded place, walk to a less crowded area. Panic attacks may happen in a grocery store while standing in line- if they don't subside with the above techniques, just leave your cart and walk outside to take deep breaths. You can always return. If they happen while driving, recognize them for what they are. If they don't subside, pull over until they do.
- Once people recognize what a panic attack feels like, many of them are able to work through them. However, if your panic attacks increase in frequency and severity and begin interfering with your daily living, see a health

care provider. There are medications which are quite successful in the treatment of Panic Disorder, and many mental health clinics have anxiety groups to teach you skills to deal with the panic attacks.

WHEN TO SEE A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER:

- If your anxiety and fears persist or worsen despite utilizing the techniques mentioned above for several weeks.
- If you continue to experience significant sleep problems or overwhelming anxiety throughout the day which interferes with your ability to function in your daily life.
- If you begin having physical symptoms related to stress, such as frequent severe headaches, nausea, diarrhea, or muscle tension.

In short, the anxiety and fears that occur when our loved ones are deployed during wartime is natural. Much of these fears can be reduced by using the techniques we have discussed. But if you are experiencing difficulty completing your daily life activities due to extreme anxiety or worry, see your health care provider for an evaluation, and check out your local Family Services Center for support.

eature Flight Jacket January 7, 2005



Cpl. Jacob I. Kehr, security battalion, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, takes a break in Al Asad, Iraq, to open up a stocking fugifts Dec. 22. *Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri*

SUPPORT

continued from page 1

at various forward operating bases throughout Iraq.

The stockings took nearly 175 man-hours to custom make by hand, not to mention filling them up, packing them in boxes and sending them to Iraq, Ivanov said. His mother's aspirations for next year grew because of the success of this year's venture, he added.

"They're about a foot tall and it takes about 15 minutes to make one and they all had to be stuffed, but I don't think it will ever be too much," Ivanov said. "My mom's goal is to get every single Iraq-deployed Marine a stocking next Christmas."

A similar story belongs to Susie Shakespeare and her two children Chris and Kelly Lenzen. The story originates when Chris, 11, and Kelly, 8, from San Clemente, Calif., planned to send their cousin, Cpl. Matthew R. Hicklin, machine-gunner, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, something for the holidays, Shakespeare said.

"Well, my children and I wanted to send my nephew Matt a care package for Christmas," she said. "Before we knew it, we had enough donations for well over 200 boxes."

In a letter that has accompanied most of the packages, Shakespeare sends heart-felt thanks to the servicemembers from her, her children and people across the country.

"Across the country, grateful hearts were sending presents for Christmas package(s) ...wishing they could do more," the card read. "So Merry Christmas, American Hero(es)! This gift is our small way of thanking you for the gift of our freedom. God bless you and protect you, (signed) grateful U.S. citizens."

Thousands of care packages, stockings, tools and gifts of all kinds were sent across Iraq to American troops by non-profit organizations, companies and concerned citizens this holiday season.

The gifts go far beyond simply giving the average servicemember junk food and hygiene items from the United States, Ivanov said.

"I think it makes people rethink what they're doing over here and take more pride in what they're doing," he explained. "They might be thinking that it's just a regular job, but when they get a little package, it really helps their day."

As the gifts keep flowing through the holiday season, Marines, Sailors and Soldiers can open a box of goodies from a U.S. citizen they've never met, and remember that they have not been forgotten.

MEU continued from page 1

Sgt. Shannon E. Middleton, the fire support chief and assistant operations chief for the MEU.

The Marines and Sailors aboard Bonhomme Richard are scheduled to land in Sri Lanka, while the Duluth will be providing critical aviation support to Indonesia, according to Staff Sgt. Julio C. Dominguez, the engineer chief for MEU Service Support Group 15.

Because the Marines and Sailors aboard Duluth will be performing different missions, Marines with the Battalion Landing Team have cross-decked from the Bonhomme Richard to the Duluth, in addition to MSSG-15 coming from Duluth to the Bonhomme Richard.

"The MSSG has been preparing for a hu-

manitarian mission of this type for about 12 months now and is more prepared for [an actual] mission," said Dominguez. "By bringing more MSSG Marines to the Bonhomme Richard, we are trying to raise our capability to meet the requirements of the (humanitarian assistance operation in Sri Lanka)."

Originally, 15th MEU was headed to the Arabian Gulf for scheduled training, but since this event occurred, many of the Marines said they are more than happy to lend a hand. "Anything we can do to help is good," said Lance Cpl. Pedro Garcia Jr., a 22-year-old radio operator with the BLT. "As long as the disaster gets cleaned up and the people get food and water, that's what is important."

The Aviation Combat Element will be playing a key role in supporting the humanitarian assistance operation, according to Capt. Michael C. Callaghan, a CH-46 pilot for the 15th MEU. "Our first objective is to get our humani-

tarian aid supplies from our ships into camps established in the country. Once all of our supplies are in the camps, our focus will shift to distributing the supplies throughout the country."

Two CH-46s will move from the Bonhomme Richard to the Duluth to help support them with their side of the mission, according to Callaghan.

It's not just Marines that are cross decking from the Duluth to the Bonhomme Richard. "The Duluth is handing over a bull-dozer, sea tractor, and a tram, and we already have an M-9 Ace to take into country with us," according to Gunnery Sgt. Jason E. Cornelison, the combat cargo assistant for well deck operations. "We are basically taking all the supplies of a construction crew to help tear down the rubble and rebuild the area."

MALS collide in 'Super Bowl'

Story by Pfc. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 Ordnance football team defeated the MALS-11 Avionics team 23-7 at the Youth Sports Complex here in a squadron "Super Bowl" tournament Dec. 17

"This year we started recognizing superior performance and what a great way to start off 2005," said Sgt. Maj. Keith L. Williams, sergeant major, MALS-11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

Ordnance flanker Petty Officer 3rd Class Israel L. Hill, returned the first kickoff for a score, which jump-started his team, giving them a 7-0 lead.

Things weren't looking good for Avionics after a turnover when Avionics cornerback Cpl. Donald T. Williams, intercepted a pass, allowing Ordnance to drive their way back toward the opposite goal line.

After a completed pass to Avionics' receiver Cpl. Jimmy L. Morris that brought Avionics within reach of the goal line, Avionics quarterback Lance Cpl. Glen E. Price made a gravity-defying leap into the end zone, tying the game at 7.

Following the score, both teams did little to change the stalemate as possession of the ball bounced back and forth between the teams. However, as the clock rolled into the third quarter, Hill finally escaped the line of defenders and scored another touchdown giving Ordnance a 16-7 lead.

"Team effort is all we require to win," said Ordnance's quarterback Lance Cpl. David D. Dixon. "If defense can keep them out of the end zone, I am confident that we will win the game."

Avionics struggled through the second half to catch Ordnance, turning over the ball in the last few minutes of the game.



Sections from Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Ordnance (right) and Avionics (left), compete in a squadron "Super Bowl" at the Youth Sports Complex. *Photo by Pfc. James B. Hoke*

Ordnance immediately hurried toward the end zone to put a little more distance between the scores and make sure their competitors would have no chance of catching them.

As the clock dwindled down to the closing of the game, Hill ran for yet another touchdown, ending the game at 23-7.

This was the first championship game for MALS-11 that was determined by several games between the various sections within the squadron.

"Being the largest squadron in the Corps at eleven hundred Marines, we have been able to break our squadron down into four teams, which include: maintenance, avionics, ordnance, and supply and headquarters," said Williams. However, for MALS-11, the season's football games provided the Marines with more than just a sport to have fun with, as it also helped to motivate the troops and build camaraderie.

"The first thing instilled in Marines in boot camp is a sense of competition," said the sergeant major. "Surveys I completed eight months ago, revealed a desire for competitive events, so this tournament and the 'Super Bowl' championship was conducted to respond to that desire.

"Competition also inspires camaraderie and an opportunity for Marines to bond," he concluded.

Flight Jacket

January 7, 2005

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Friday:

4:30 p.m. The Polar Express (G) 6:30 p.m. National Treasure (PG) 9:00 p.m. After the Sunset (PG-13)

Saturday:

6:30 p.m. SpongeBob SquarePants (PG) 8:30 p.m. Christmas with the Kranks (PG)

1 p.m. T.B.A.- Special Advanced Screening (PG) 6:30 p.m. Seed of Chucky (R)

Wednesday:

6:30 p.m. Blade: Trinity (R)

Thursday:

2 p.m. National Treasure (PG) 6:30 p.m. National Treasure (PG) Presentations and time subject to change.

Fantasy wedding giveaway

Interested in a free wedding? If you were engaged before Jan. 1, 2005, call (760)725-5780. The Fallbrook Chamber of Commerce will host a "Fantasy Wedding" for a lucky couple, to include a ceremony and catered reception. Applications are due by Jan. 14.

Counter Intelligence

CI/HUMINT seeks NCOs for 0211 MOS. For more information, call (858)281-4653.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service 11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

Wednesday:

7 p.m. Baptist service Monday-Friday: 11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass

Jewish:

7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD 7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

Tax season approaches

The full schedule for 2004 tax statement releases can be found at www.dfas.mil/news. Servicemembers, military retirees and defense civilian employees can access their statements at https://mypay.dfas.mil.

Marine Corps Active and Reserve W2s:

- myPay access- 01/10/05
- mail dates- 01/18/05
- Navy Active W2s: **myPay access**- 01/14/05
- mail dates- 01/18/05-01/24/05

Buick Invitational

The Century Club is inviting all active duty military to the Buick Invitational Golf Tournament at Torrey Pines, Jan. 17-23. For more information, call (858) 281-4653.

Winter Camp 2004

Marine Corps Community Services will sponsor a winter activity camp for children Dec. 20 through Jan. 17. The camp will feature arts and crafts, field trips, sports and games, and more. All paperwork must be completed before children can be registered. For more information, call 577-4163.

Commissary offers college scholarships

The Scholarships for Military Children is underway. Submissions, including an essay on the impact heightened awareness of terrorism has had on applicants' lives are due at the commissary Feb. 15. The program is open to unmarried children of servicemembers. Log on to www.militaryscholar.org.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal's Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:
1995 Dodge Neon	CA/3KGZ374
1989 Subaru GL	CA/1REE135
Unk. Honda Prelude	No Plates No VIN
Red Sea King Boat	No Plates No ID
Hydra Sports Boat	FL/CZ39M
Unk. VW Jetta	No Plates No VIN

Vehicle:	License:
1993 Plymoth Voyager	4HVP334
Unk. Mazda 626	CA/1STD385
1993 Ford Escourt	CA/3EKK843
1998 Honda DX	CA/2YBS381
Unk. Honda Accord	GA/77693
1990 Ford Mustang	CA/2TAX992